

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1-4. (CANCELED)

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of connecting telecommunications service cables comprising:

providing an equipment mounting rack with a fanout module, an adapter module, a connector holder module and a cable management structure mounted to the rack;

directing a multi-strand optical fiber service cable to the fanout module;

separating the multiple strands of fiber in the service cable into individual fiber patch cords extending from the fanout module, with a distal end of each patch cord terminated with a fiber optic connector, the fiber optic connector including a dust cap and a ferrule, the dust cap positioned about the ferrule, the ferrule holding an optical fiber having a polished end face, the dust cap including a closed end opposing a the polished end face of the optical fiber;

extending a first patch cord from the fanout module into the cable management structure so that the connector of the first patch cord is proximate a fiber optic connector holder mounted within an opening in a front of the connector holder module;

inserting the fiber optic connector of the first patch cord into the fiber optic connector holder without removing the dust cap;

removing the dust cap from the polished end face;

adjusting the first patch cord within the cable management structure so that the connector is proximate a fiber optic adapter mounted within an opening in a front of the adapter module;

inserting the connector of the first patch cord into the adapter so that the optical fiber of the patch cord is optically connected to a second connector inserted within an opposite end of the adapter.

6. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 5, wherein the opening in the front of the connector holder module is sized to permit mounting of the adapter upon removal of the connector holder.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 6, wherein the method further comprises removal of the connector holder from the opening in the connector holder module and mounting an adapter such as mounted in the adapter module in the opening in the connector holder module.

8. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 5, wherein a plurality of adapters are mounted to the adapter module, a plurality of connector holders are mounted to the connector holder module, and a plurality of patch cords extend from the fanout module.

9. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 8, wherein the method further comprises directing the connector of each of the patch cords from the fanout module to the cable management structure and to one of the adapter module and the connector holder module, and inserting any connectors directed to the connector holder module within a connector holder without removing the dust cap.

10. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 5, wherein the adapter module includes a splitter which combines optical signals from patch cords inserted within one or more of the plurality of adapters into a single optical fiber.

11. (ORIGINAL) A method of connecting telecommunications cables comprising:  
providing a first panel including an array of connector holders on the panel for selectively receiving a first plurality of connectors and a second panel including an array of adapters on the panel for selectively receiving the first plurality of connectors, the first plurality of connectors each having a dust cap about a first end;  
inserting the first end of each of the first plurality of connectors into the connector holders of the first panel;  
withdrawing a selected one of the first plurality of the connectors from the connector holder;  
removing the dust cap from the first end of the selected connector;  
inserting the first end of the selected connector into one of the adapters of the second panel so that the selected connector is optically connected to a second connector inserted in an opposite end of the adapter.

12-19. (CANCELED)

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A telecommunications connection cabinet comprising:

    a housing including a front opening for accessing an interior of the housing, the housing also including a front door for opening and closing the front opening;

    an array of telecommunications adapters mounted within the interior of the housing, each telecommunications adapter being configured for coupling together two fiber optic connectors such that an optical interconnection is made between the two fiber optic connectors;

    a first fiber optic cord having an end that terminates at a first fiber optic connector;

    a storage area positioned within the interior of the housing for temporarily storing fiber optic connectors, the first fiber optic connector being stored at the storage area;

    the first fiber optic connector including a connector body having a first end and a second end, the first fiber optic connector also including a ferrule positioned at the first end of the connector body, the ferrule having a side surface and a ~~polished~~an end surface, the ferrule holding an optical fiber having a polished end face positioned at the end surface of the ferrule;

    a dust cap having an open end positioned opposite from a closed end, the dust cap including an inner surface defining a central opening that extends from the open end to the closed end of the dust cap, the dust cap being mounted on the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector with the inner surface of the dust cap engaging the side surface of the ferrule and the closed end of the dust cap opposing the ~~polished~~ end surface of the ferrule; and

    the storage area including a connector holder for holding the first fiber optic connector with the dust cap mounted on the ferrule, the connector holder having a front side and a back side, wherein when the first fiber optic connector is held by the connector holder, the connector holder blocks access to the first end of the connector body from the front side of the connector holder.

21. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 20, wherein when the first fiber optic connector is held by the connector holder, the second end of the connector body projects outwardly from the front side of the connector holder in a forward direction.

22. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 20, wherein the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector defines a longitudinal axis, and wherein the longitudinal axis is generally horizontal when the first fiber optic connector is held by the connector holder.

23. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 20, wherein the array of telecommunications adapters and the storage area are provided at a bulkhead of the cabinet.

24. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 20, wherein the dust cap has a one-piece construction.

25. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 20, wherein the closed end of the dust cap is positioned in close proximity to the polished end face of the ferrule-optical fiber when the dust cap is mounted on the ferrule.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 20, wherein the telecommunications adapters include front ports and rear ports, wherein rear connectors corresponding to subscriber lines are inserted in the rear ports, and wherein the first connector is removed from the storage area and inserted into one of the front ports to optically connect the first fiber optic cord to a selected subscriber line, the first connector being inserted into the front port without the dust cap being present on the ferrule of the first connector.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 20, wherein the connector holder includes at least one resilient connector holding member that flexes when the first fiber optic connector is inserted into the connector holder.

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 20, wherein the connector holder lacks means for coupling together two fiber optic connectors such that an optical interconnection is made between the two fiber optic connectors.

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A telecommunications connection cabinet comprising:

    a housing including a front side and a rear side, the front side defining a front opening for accessing an interior of the housing, the housing also including a front door for opening and closing the front opening;

    an array of telecommunications adapters mounted within the interior of the housing, each telecommunications adapter being configured for coupling together two fiber optic connectors such that an optical interconnection is made between the two fiber optic connectors;

    a first fiber optic cord having an end that terminates at a first fiber optic connector;

    a storage area positioned within the interior of the housing for temporarily storing fiber optic connectors, the first fiber optic connector being stored at the storage area;

    the first fiber optic connector including a connector body having a first end and a second end, the first fiber optic connector also including a ferrule positioned at the first end of the connector body, the ferrule having a side surface and ~~a polished~~an end surface, the ferrule holding an optical fiber having a polished end face positioned adjacent the end surface of the ferrule, the ferrule defining a longitudinal axis;

    a dust cap having an open end positioned opposite from a closed end, the dust cap including an inner surface defining a central opening that extends from the open end to the closed end of the dust cap, the dust cap being mounted on the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector with the inner surface of the dust cap engaging the side surface of the ferrule and the closed end of the dust cap opposing the ~~polished~~ end surface of the ferrule; and

    the storage area including a connector holder for holding the first fiber optic connector with the dust cap mounted on the ferrule, wherein when the first fiber optic connector is held by the connector holder, the longitudinal axis of the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector extends generally in a front to rear orientation relative to the housing.

30. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 29, wherein the longitudinal axis is generally horizontal when the first fiber optic connector is held by the connector holder.

31. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 29, wherein the array of telecommunications adapters and the storage area are provided at a bulkhead of the cabinet.

32. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 29, wherein the dust cap has a one-piece construction.

33. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 29, wherein the closed end of the dust cap is positioned in close proximity to the polished end face of the ferrule-optical fiber when the dust cap is mounted on the ferrule.

34. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 29, wherein the telecommunications adapters include front ports and rear ports, wherein rear connectors corresponding to subscriber lines are inserted in the rear ports, and wherein the first connector is removed from the storage area and inserted into one of the front ports to optically connect the first fiber optic cord to a selected subscriber line, the first connector being inserted into the front port without the dust cap being present on the ferrule of the first connector.

35. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 29, wherein the connector holder includes at least one resilient connector holding member that flexes when the first fiber optic connector is inserted into the connector holder.

36. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The telecommunications connection cabinet of claim 29, wherein the connector holder lacks means for coupling together two fiber optic connectors such that an optical interconnection is made between the two fiber optic connectors.

37. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for managing a fiber optic cord of a telecommunications connection cabinet, the fiber optic cord having an end that terminates at a first fiber optic connector, the first fiber optic connector including a connector body having a first end and a second end, the first fiber optic connector also including a ferrule positioned at the first end of the connector body, the ferrule having a side surface and a polished-an end surface,

the ferrule holding an optical fiber having a polished end face, the telecommunications cabinet also including an adapter for coupling the first fiber optic connector with a second fiber optic connector, and a storage area for storing the first fiber optic connector before the first fiber optic connector has been coupled to the second fiber optic connector, the method comprising:

mounting a dust cap over the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector, the dust cap having an open end positioned opposite from a closed end, the dust cap including an inner surface defining a central opening that extends from the open end to the closed end of the dust cap, the dust cap being mounted over the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector with the inner surface of the dust cap engaging the side surface of the ferrule and the closed end of the dust cap opposing the polished-end surface of the ferrule; and

inserting the first end of the connector body of the first fiber optic connector into a connector holder, the first fiber optic connector being inserted into the connector holder with the dust cap in place over the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector, wherein the connector holder is adapted to temporarily hold the first fiber optic connector at the storage area of the telecommunications connection cabinet until it is desired to couple the first fiber optic connector to the second fiber optic connector, the dust cap being mounted over the ferrule while the first fiber optic connector is held by the connector holder.

38. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 37, wherein the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector defines a longitudinal axis, and wherein the longitudinal axis is not generally vertically oriented when the first fiber optic connector is held by the connector holder.

39. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 38, wherein the longitudinal axis of the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector is generally horizontally oriented when the first fiber optic connector is held by the connector holder.

40. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 37, further comprising,  
removing the first fiber optic connector from the connector holder after the first fiber optic connector has been stored at the storage area for a period of time;  
removing the dust cap from the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector after the first fiber optic connector has been removed from the connector holder; and

inserting the first fiber optic connector into the adapter after the dust cap has been removed from the ferrule of the first fiber optic connector.

41. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 37, wherein the connector holder includes at least one resilient connector holding member that flexes when the first fiber optic connector is inserted into the connector holder.

42. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 29, wherein the connector holder comprises:

a main housing defining a top, a bottom, a pair of opposing sides, and a cavity with an open end sized to receive the first fiber optic connector with the dust cap mounted on the ferrule;

an inner housing disposed within the main housing and including a dust cap opening sized to receive the dust cap when the first fiber optic connector is received in the open end of the main housing;

the inner housing including at least one retaining clip which releasably latches onto the first fiber optic connector and releasably holds the first fiber optic connector within the open end of the main housing.

43. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 42, further comprising a bulkhead mounted within the interior of the housing, the bulkhead including openings sized to fit the telecommunications adapters and an opening sized to fit the connector holder, wherein the opening sized to fit the connector holder has the same footprint as the openings sized to fit the telecommunications adapters.

44. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 43, wherein an outer clip is fitted about the main housing of the connector holder and includes at least one releasable catch positioned along one of the sides of the main housing for engaging the opening in the bulkhead.

45. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 42, wherein the main housing of the connector holder includes a flange extending from at least one of the sides.

46. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 42, wherein the inner housing includes a pair of retaining clips which releasably engage recesses along the sides of the first fiber optic connector when the first fiber optic connector is received in the opening.

47. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 42, wherein the main housing of the connector holder includes an open top sized to permit the inner housing of the connector holder to be inserted within the cavity and a cover sized to fit within and close off the open top.

48. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 47, wherein the cover is a separate piece from the main housing and is attached to the main housing within the open top to hold the inner housing within the cavity.

49. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 42, wherein the dust cap extends outside of the main housing of the connector holder when the first fiber optic connector is held by the retaining clip of the inner housing.

50. (NEW) The telecommunications cabinet of claim 42, wherein the main housing of the connector holder does not include a second open end for receiving a second fiber optic connector.